

the distance moving nearer and getting taller until it engulfed him. Further, sensations of being physically extended, as well as of being outside one's body, are also sometimes found in association with migraine headaches. Secondly, how coincidental is it that many of his experiences resemble mescaline visions? He describes seeing a Gothic building in terms strikingly like those used by Weir Mitchell of his famous mescaline vision, and frequently refers to seeing a sort of backdrop of 'small misty-blue or mauve vibrating circles . . . somewhat resembling a mass of frog's eggs', which sounds like some of the geometrical patterns experienced in the drug-state.

Both these questions raise the problem of the relationship of hallucinatory activities of the brain to out-of-the-body experiences. The presence of ESP in some of these experiences makes it impossible to dismiss them altogether as mere subjective fantasies, yet, whatever the means of obtaining the extra-sensory information they contain, the sensory form it takes seems suspect. Indeed, one of the ways of initiating an experience of this kind, as Fox points out, is to note that some detail of your environment is not as it *really* is, so that you must be dreaming it. It is very much to Oliver Fox's credit that his detailed, vivid and highly readable accounts bring this problem so forcefully to our attention.

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The 'Anderson Testimony'

SIR,—A few years ago, I was moved to write to the *Journal* urging that psychical researchers should not accept statements to the discredit of other psychical researchers when these statements are given under conditions of secrecy. The occasions for this earlier letter was a published statement by X that he had been told many years before under a pledge of secrecy that certain psychic photographs by Y were faked and that Z knew about this faking but concealed his knowledge. This delayed release of the injurious information seemed to me to be objectionable on two grounds. First, X had made himself an accessory to fraud by withholding information for so long. Secondly, he finally released the information when Y and Z were both dead and any testing of the truth or falsity of the charges against them had become impossible.

I think the same objections hold against the initial secrecy and subsequent publication of the Anderson allegations about Sir William Crookes. These have led, not unnaturally, to the certainly unjust charge that the Society was concerned to hush up a scandal about one of its past presidents. It seems to me intolerable that the Society should be put into a position in which such a suggestion can be made by the action of certain officers without the knowledge or consent of either the Council or the President.

In her letter in the September 1962 number of the *Journal*, Mrs Goldney would justify the action taken as parallel to the Society's caution with respect to 'hearsay marvels of the séance room based on memories of more than half a century'. This justification does not stand close examination. What the Society would not do with such stories of marvels is to place them on a secret file and then allow delayed publication. That would be action calculated to exaggerate their importance and to maximise the mischief they would do when released.

Mrs Goldney also says that the Anderson documents were not a secret buried in the archives of the Society, since they were available for *bona fide* students in the Society's files. How were they available if students did not know of their existence? I was a member of Council, an ex-president, when Mrs Goldney received Anderson's deposition but I did not know anything about this statement until last year.

It seems to me very wrong that the filing of this material should have taken place without the authority of the Council. What made it too confidential for the Council was apparently its too vivid account of the seduction of Mr Anderson by Mrs Corner, but this is of no psychical research interest and need not have been recorded. Even if the document were necessarily confidential, the Council should have been informed that confidential material dealing with Crookes's sittings with Florence Cook was being offered to the Society for its files, and should have itself decided whether or not it was appropriate to accept it for the files, after having considered information given to it as to all the factors determining the reliability of the material in question.

Undoubtedly the Council would have had a difficult decision to make. They would have had to consider that 57 years was a long time of incubation for memories which could, during that period, undergo the processes of sophistication and systematisation to which Podmore has drawn attention. Also they would have had to consider that evidence of the form that A says that B told him many years ago something to the discredit of C, is not of much value as evidence against C. They would also have remembered

Potiphar's wife, and considered that a woman of loose character may claim without foundation that some eminent man has seduced her, and may have obvious motives of vanity which might lead her falsely to boast that she had been clever enough to deceive that scientist or seductive enough to make him her accomplice. No doubt these points were considered by those who did decide on filing the testimony but the right body to have considered them and decided on whether or not the testimony was to be filed was the Council.

I think there was further impropriety in the publication of information about the Anderson depositions. They were given publicity at two public meetings before the Council had even been informed that the material was on the Society's files. It is no reply to the objection to this publicising of the matter without the Council's permission that the permission of the Council was later asked for the communicating of the material to Mr Trevor Hall; this was some months afterwards.

I welcome the publication in the *Journal* of the deposition made by Mr Anderson on Dec. 4th 1949. I regret, however, that it has been judged necessary to omit the statement made to Dingwall in 1922 and the statement made verbally to Mrs Goldney in Nov. 1949, since a comparison between these three statements reveals how much development there was in Anderson's story and raises grave doubts of the reliability of his latest statement. Anyone only able to read this latest form of the deposition will not, for example, know that it is only here that one finds the sensational statement that Mrs Corner said that Crookes was her accomplice. There is nothing whatever about the matter in the statement made before Dingwall in 1922. In the verbal statement to Mrs Goldney, what is said is that Anderson inferred Crookes's complicity from the fact that Florence Cook knew how to take spirit photographs with ultra-violet light. This is in contradiction with the later statement that Florence told him that Crookes was an accomplice. This latter statement seems to have been an element of sophistication introduced into Anderson's memories during the eleven days between the two statements.

It is interesting also to notice that the 1922 statement says nothing about fraud in the Crookes sittings but refers only to Florence having told Anderson about how she took spirit photographs of her daughters. These, of course, had not been born at the time of the Crookes sittings. Is it possible that these stories developed in Anderson's memory into stories about the Crookes sittings? This transition seems very likely when we notice that the account of how the Katie King photographs were taken by

ultra-violet light is obviously transferred from the situation of taking spirit photographs of the daughters. Anderson said he knew no physics. If he had, he would have realised that the point of using ultra-violet light is to get on to the negative a form invisible to the onlookers, which was not the problem in the Katie King photographs; the spirit form was visible to the onlookers and ultra-violet light would have contributed nothing. For producing spirit photographs of daughters many years later ultra-violet light might have been useful.

What did Mrs Corner really tell Mr Anderson? The more closely one studies all the Anderson testimony, the more uncertain seems the answer to this question. It seems fairly clear that she did boast of having been Crookes's mistress, but there seems to be no reason within the testimonies for supposing that she was here telling the truth. It does not seem likely that she said that her sittings with Crookes were fraudulent. She seems to have told him how she produced fraudulent spirit photographs of her daughters by ultra-violet light. This is all that was mentioned in the statement to Dingwall and seems to have been confused with the Crookes sittings in the course of the long period between that and the statements to Mrs Goldney. There seems no reason at all for supposing that she told him that Crookes was her accomplice; that seems to have been a sophistication introduced between the two statements to Mrs Goldney. The three statements compared provide an excellent illustration of the systematisation of memories during the course of time.

Should such uncertain old man's memories be given the distinction of a place on our files? If this question had come before the Council, I should have voted against their acceptance. I might have had to accept a majority decision the other way, but it was certainly a matter that should have been decided by the Council.

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SIR,—Referring to the '*Complaints and Answers*' concerning the S.P.R.'s handling of the late F. G. H. Anderson's testimony about Sir William Crookes and Florence Cook (*Journal*, 1963, 42, pp. 96-7), I would like to make the following comment.

There seems to me to be one and only one matter in which the action taken by those concerned was *prima facie* at fault, and where the answer given is unsatisfactory. This is the point which is raised in § 4, viz., the communication in 1949 of the Testimony to 'certain selected Spiritualists'. The answer given is that this was

done 'with Anderson's knowledge and consent' in order to discourage rash claims, based on the supposed genuineness of the Cook mediumship, in quarters where such claims were likely to be made'.

In my opinion it was improper to communicate information filed with the S.P.R. to anyone, without first consulting and obtaining permission of the Council. Neither the fact of Anderson's 'knowledge and consent', nor the wish to 'discourage rash claims' on the part of Spiritualists, is relevant to this criticism.

No doubt the Council is a large and leaky body, as is stated in the Answer under § 3. That might well be a good and sufficient reason for not confiding to its members in 1949 the contents of Anderson's testimony or even the fact that it existed in the files of the Society. But, in so far as this could not prudently have been confided to the Council at the time, it most certainly ought not to have been communicated by any of their Officers to anyone else.

In all other respects, it seems to me, those concerned handled a very difficult and embarrassing situation in the best, or the least bad, way possible.

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SIR,—Mr Trevor Hall's startling indictment of Sir William Crookes rests entirely on two suppositions, viz:

- (1) That Crookes was sexually infatuated with Florence Cook, and
- (2) That her alleged confessions to her two young lovers in the early 1890's, were in fact true statements.

No real evidence is given for either assumption, though a great deal is done throughout the book by way of insinuation and gratuitous imputations of motive for various actions or omissions by Crookes.

To deal first with the infatuation. Apart from the various innuendoes scattered throughout the book, and apart from the glib way he always equates Crookes' fondness for Katie with a sexual passion for her medium, Mr Hall's case rests on a quite astonishing interpretation of the quotation of a stanza from 'Don Juan'.

In his letter of June 5th 1874 to *The Spiritualist* Crookes relates the final appearance of Katie King and indulges in a little panegyric of her beauty and sweetness of nature, in which he quotes (without acknowledgement) six lines of a stanza in which Byron eulogizes Haidee. The stanza really has eight lines, the two omitted reading:

As pure as Psyche ere she grew a wife—
Too pure even for the purest human ties.

First of all Mr Hall finds it 'significant that Crookes did not give the provenance of the verse in this instance', apparently because on a previous occasion he had once quoted lines from a minor poet, T. L. Harris, with due acknowledgement. From this he confidently infers that Crookes wanted Florence Cook to think that he had composed the verses himself as a tribute to her (although it is ostensibly a tribute to Katie).

But surely in 1874 Byron was sufficiently well known as a major poet for educated people to recognize a quotation and Crookes would not feel it necessary to put 'Byron' underneath, as he would in the case of a very minor poet like Harris.

Next we have 'the accurate quotation of the six lines means that Crookes was not relying upon memory. He had copied the stanza, and the omission of the fifth and sixth lines was therefore deliberate'.

I don't know whether this reasoning is any worse than much else in the book, but it does seem a bit unfair not to allow Crookes (a highly cultivated man) to memorize poetry, nor to choose out whatever passages he prefers to quote. In any case there are two very natural explanations of the omission—either that he did not happen to remember those two lines, or that they introduced a new thought which slightly weakened the effect of the four first lines; he might (in 1874, remember) even have felt that reference to purity was a little immodest.

But Mr Hall has to find a damaging explanation, namely that the stanza was quoted as a love-tribute to Florence, and that any reference to purity was obviously inappropriate to Crookes' mistress!

In defiance of the context Mr Hall arbitrarily asserts: 'The lines were clearly directed by the infatuated Crookes to Florence as an expression of his passionate love for her, and their ostensible reference to Katie King was merely a fiction.'

Why Crookes should serenade Florence in this roundabout way via *The Spiritualist*, and make such a back-handed compliment by omitting the 'purity' lines, is not explained by Mr Hall, whose whole treatment of the matter is a wonderful circle which, starting from the premiss 'Crookes was infatuated with Florence', leads via a series of arbitrary interpretations to the conclusion that Crookes was infatuated with Florence!

As to the second prop in Mr Hall's thesis, there is not a lot to be said. Two elderly men told S.P.R. officials that in their youth

(they being about 23 and possibly 21 while Florence Cook was about 37) they had had love affairs with Florence, who had boasted to them that in 1874 Crookes had been her lover, and that his séances had been fraudulent and served to cover up their intrigue. There is no good reason to doubt the recollection of these two about conversations held some thirty or more years previously, although since M. Bois had apparently more than once asserted in print that Florence was fraudulent it is possible that Mr Anderson's memories were not wholly independent.

But the actual confessions (in the 1890's) by Florence are quite worthless. They are too obviously the boasts of a vain woman wanting to impress her young lovers, and are analogous to the confessions often made to the police by somewhat unbalanced people who need to magnify their importance.

By 1890 Florence had gone a long way downhill, morally and financially. She was no longer in the limelight, her 'powers' had declined sadly, she was sexually promiscuous, and was generally neglected. Her boasts that she had once held the now famous Sir William Crookes in thrall could never be taken seriously as evidence, though unfortunately they are effective mud which tends to stick.

Finally, on page 34, Mr Hall asks why Crookes published his first letter in defence of Florence Cook in *The Spiritualist* of Feb. 6th 1874, and finds a sinister interpretation for this. 'Yet there must have been some compelling reason which forced him to record the story of the miracles he had witnessed in the pages of a cheap spiritualist paper, rather than, as in the case of his previous work, within the covers of a learned journal or a treatise written by himself.' (Note incidentally the tendentious force of the words 'compelling' and 'forced', neither of which have any justification.) And again on p. 38 he returns to it—to suggest that Florence compelled Crookes to write the letter, which makes it easier to understand why he chose a weekly paper rather than a scientific journal.

The reasoning here is a little weak, as a vindication in a reputable scientific journal would have done Florence a lot more good than one in *The Spiritualist*. But in fact the explanation is quite obvious. Crookes' letter was a direct answer to the articles and letters about the Volckman 'exposure' which had appeared in *The Spiritualist* during Dec. 1873. Crookes, by February 1874, had become convinced that Katie King was genuine, and he wished to vindicate without delay 'one whom I believe to be unjustly accused'. His letters were not scientific detailed reports, but summarized accounts of sittings. They were not such as a scientific journal of that period would have accepted, and his own *Quarterly Journal of*

Science had already appeared in January, so that even here there would have been a delay until April. There is thus no mystery at all and no justification for Mr Hall's insinuations.

In sum, Mr Hall's book does nothing to incriminate Crookes himself in fraud, and leaves the case for or against Katie King exactly where it was before—either a genuine materialization (whether of a dead spirit or an ectoplasmic projection) or else a very ingenious imposture.

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Astral Travelling

SIR,—In his review of Professor C. D. Broad's *Lectures on Psychical Research* Dr John Beloff (*Journ.* 42, p. 77) said: "There is one feature of this book which, I am afraid, can only depress any reader. . . . Again and again, after recounting some particularly striking phenomenon, such, for example, as the deliberate production of an apparition of an agent to a distant percipient, the author is forced to add some qualification as 'one's' only ground for suspicion (and that not a very cogent one, logically) is that no reports of similar cases have been recorded by the S.P.R. in the last seventy years.' Dr Beloff concluded, 'One can only hope that some enthusiast may harken to this *cri-de-coeur*.'

I had a letter dated 9 December, 1962, from Mr Edward G. West, a Quaker, of Cross Garden Cottage, Salcombe, S. Devon, who kindly gave me permission to quote from it. He stated: "Thank you for the suggestion that, since I had once, at any rate, been astral travelling, why not again? I accepted the idea and spent some time at 8.50 p.m. two nights ago, concentrating on the idea of visiting an invalid whom I knew to be suffering. I deliberately visualized herself and condition and tried to add to the vision a cured condition. The concentration lasted a few minutes, and I went on thinking other things. Later (five to ten minutes later—Ed.) the patient telephoned me and said, "I want to see you—What were you doing at 10 to 9.00? I don't wish to tell you on the 'phone." Next night I called about 7 p.m. She had improved and said to me, "I want to tell you what happened. At the time I had my eyes shut and was half-dreaming, and I heard your voice say, "Would you like me to pray for you?" So I heard your voice and opened my eyes and you had gone: it surprised me you weren't there and that was why I rang you up and asked where you were at 10 to 9."

I am not aware of anything strange or unusual; the only difference to the ordinary was that, remembering your kind